

## Deconstructing IEP Activity

*Purpose:* The below IEP format provides classroom staff and families with information on *what* to teach, *where* to teach, and *how* to teach young children with significant disabilities in inclusive classrooms. In addition, teachers sometimes “inherit” IEPs from other teachers or from other educational staff who develop IEPs. As such teachers sometimes “deconstruct” the IEP in order to make sense of what they need to teach, where they need to teach it, and how they need to teach it. The steps for “deconstructing” an IEP objective are relatively easy and are listed below. Following the steps are examples from “real” IEPs that have been deconstructed.

- **Step 1:** Determine the critical skill of the objective.

Critical skills are defined as behaviors that are required for participation in activities. They are not activities, nor are they materials. Critical skills can be embedded into a variety of daily activities.

- **Step 2:** Rewrite the objective so it is measurable and meaningful.

Occasionally, objectives are written too narrowly which precludes the teacher from teaching across activities (e.g., “child will use a pincer grasp to pick up raisins”). In this step, the teacher writes the objective in a broad way, not specifying specific materials, or situations under which the skill will be taught. For example, Child will grasp objects/materials using his thumb and forefinger. Further, there are times when objectives do not contain antecedents, measurable behaviors, and criteria that will allow teams to monitor a child's performance.

- **Step 3:** Identify **sample** activities in which the skill can be taught.

This provides the context for teaching the critical skill. The activities listed are not meant to be an exhaustive list of every opportunity for teaching the skills. Rather they are intended to be examples that sample a variety of environments and activities.

- **Step 4:** Identify adaptations for teaching the skills.

This is the “specially designed instruction” component of the IEP. Teachers should identify instruction adaptations, environmental adaptations, materials, technology, etc. that are needed for teaching a specific skill.

For each of the “problematic” objectives below, identify the critical skill (there may be more than one) associated with the objective. Next, write a measurable and meaningful objective designed to help a child acquire, strengthen, or maintain the critical skills. Then, identify at least three daily activities in which you and other team members might address the critical skill. Lastly, brainstorm adaptations that may be necessary for a child with more significant delays/disabilities.

### **Example #1:**

**The student will answer yes/no questions about what he wants to eat/drink at meal time 80% of the time.**

**Problem:** This objective is too restrictive. Answering yes/no questions is something that can be done through many activities, not just at lunch about food and drink. Further, 80% of the time requires that data be collected continuously because the parameters have not been specified.

### **Alternate:**

- **Critical skill(s):** Answering yes/no questions
  
- **Measurable objective:** During a variety of daily activities, and when asked a yes/no question by an adult or peer, the child will answer yes/no by verbally saying “yes” or “no,” 2 out of 3 questions presented each day for 3 consecutive days.
  
- **Sample activities:**
  - \* Circle – who to sit next to
  - \* Snack – what to eat/drink
  - \* Playground – what piece of equipment to play on
  - \* Art – what art medium to use

### **Example #2:**

**The student will cut out a square and circle by staying on the outline shape independently 2 out of 3 tries.**

**Problem:** Cutting is not a critical skill since it is not something that can be embedded across daily activities and routines. The critical skill is the development of fine motor skills such as grasping and manipulating objects with both hands.

### **Alternate:**

- **\*Critical skill(s):** Manipulating a variety of objects to (a) complete daily activities such as feeding and dressing, (b) participate in daily activities such as free play and circle time, and (c) play/use with objects found in the environment such as books, puzzles, and art supplies.
  
- **Measurable objective:** Once a day, for two weeks, during at least three different daily activities that require use of two hands, child will independently use one hand to hold or steady an object while the other hand manipulates the object or performs a movement
  
- **Sample activities:**
  - \* Art – using scissors to make a collage, painting a picture
  - \* Dramatic play - opening and closing an oven mitt to retrieve items from an “oven,” tying strings to an apron, stirring a pot of soup, dressing dolls
  - \* Reading center – opening and closing a puppet’s mouth to tell a story, turning the pages of a book
  - \* Block area – stacking blocks or Duplos